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A. B. DE ST. M. D'HERVILLY

THE death on April 7, 1919, of Mr. d'Hervilly, who had served the Trustees for twenty-five years in different positions, latterly as Assistant Curator of Paintings, came to all in the Museum as a personal loss. His was a strong personality which pervaded everything he did, which changed any position he held unto himself.

With the most unselfish interest he absorbed himself in the work of the Museum, early and late, in season and out of season. His capacity for work was unbounded and his sympathy and helpfulness were un-failing. Such qualities invigorate others as well as sustain them. His place will never be filled. He made the place. Of a distinguished French family, he exemplified its traditions in his manners and in his mind. His influence will long be felt—the influence of the faithful service of a faithful friend.

MRS. AGNES L. VAUGHAN

MRS. VAUGHAN, who had been associated with the Museum Staff since 1914, as an Instructor in special charge of work with the public schools of the higher grades, died suddenly on April 11, 1919.

Mrs. Vaughan had long been known for her work along the line which has come to be recognized as an integral part of museum activities. She was one of the first to fill the position of an instructor, and the present successful operation of this kind of work in museums is in large measure due to her vision and her thoughtful consideration of its problems.

She took the lead in bringing together the members of her profession for discussion of their problems and possibilities with the design of standardizing the qualifications for such service, through high principles in method, sympathetic attitude, and real attainment in scholarship.

RECENT ACCESSIONS

A SPANISH ALB. A work of monumental patience, the scope of which it is difficult to grasp in these irritating days of unrest, is shown in the Spanish alb recently presented to the Museum by Mrs. Ansley Wilcox of Buffalo. The vestment dates from the end of the eighteenth century and was purchased in Spain by the donor from the family of the archbishop for whom it was made.

At first glance it is impossible to realize the unusual beauty of this vestment; it appears to be a fine old linen of openwork weave, beautifully embroidered in gold thread, with a little frill of Malines lace at the back and sleeves, fastened at the throat with a splendid gold cord and tassels interwoven with purple silk, not unlike many another sumptuous vestment from the wardrobe of an archbishop. A magnifying glass, however, soon reveals its hidden beauty and unfolds to the eye the wilderness

of intricate stitchery that has transformed a simple breadth of plain linen into a transparent fabric of most delicate lacelike texture.

The overwhelming amount of preparatory work in such an undertaking can only be realized by figuring it out thread by thread. About eight yards of twenty-seven-inch goods were required for this garment, and to reduce this to *filés tirés* of the exquisite quality here shown means an outlay of ten hundred and seventy-one stitches to the square inch, or over forty-one million stitches in the groundwork of the entire vestment. To produce this drawnwork three weft threads between each alternate five were drawn from the plain linen cloth, the remaining threads of the warp and weft forming a delicate network or mesh; and in each of these infinitesimal squares the worker placed four silk stitches, which in the finished garment lend to the linen an added sheen.

The embroidery, which is in pure gold thread, is worked in a delicate tambour or chain stitch. The upper part of the alb has a set pattern of small floral sprays and birds, while the lower half is bordered by an elaborate frieze designed with an elegance that can be attributed only to an artist of first rank, and reflects the art of the French ornamentists of the Louis XVI period. The design of this is made up of a series of subjects chosen from biblical literature; each figure is placed on an elaborately drawn pedestal beneath a gracefully turned baldachino topped with festoons supported by slender uprights with foliated scrolls and wheatheads, combined with the dove motive repeated from the field pattern. Above each alternate canopy appears the familiar fountain motive with two confronted birds, a survival of sixteenth-century ornament.

The arrangement of the figures is as follows: directly in front and in the center of the back are two as yet unidentified; a female figure with flowing draperies and garlands suggesting at once the nymphs in Botticelli's *Spring*. In these, each line is replete with buoyant action that reflects a certain joyousness which is in strong contrast to the other tragic subjects among which it is placed. In front at the right of the center three biblical themes are represented: Samson slaying the Philistine, the Ascension, and the Resurrection. At the left are David the royal harpist, Judith bearing aloft the head of Holofernes, and John the Baptist. While the position of the figure holding the head, placed as it is next to that of John the Baptist, might represent Salome, it will be remembered that Salome usually bears the head on a salver while Judith, as in this case, holds it in her uplifted hand.

The enticing possibilities of this needlework whet the imagination with an inordinate desire to build castles in Spain and people them with the figures of one's fancy, to envisage the stately archbishop in the sumptuous apparel of his calling, the gentle nuns in the quiet of their daily routine fashioning vestments for the holy offices of the Church. But no records remain to us save the delicacy and refinement

of the work in which every stitch bears the stamp of a devotional art inspired by the religious fervor of some cloistered sisterhood.

During the present month the alb will be shown in the Room of Recent Accessions, after which it will be placed with the ecclesiastical vestments in Wing H, Room 22.

F. M.

AN ENGLISH DRESSING TABLE. This month, the Room of Recent Accessions contains a fine example of English cabinet work of about 1790-95. The dressing table or cabinet,¹ speaks eloquently of a time when men as well as women spent much fastidious care on elaborate and complicated toilets, which took so much time and ceremony that the boudoir became, for a period, the main reception room of the fashionable establishment. To the student of furniture the rapid development of bedroom furnishings in the eighteenth century in England alone, gives ample testimony to this fact. As the century advanced, the bedroom or dressing room became open, as it were, to the public eye, and the thought and expense which had hitherto been largely concentrated on the living rooms were diverted in some degree to the embellishment of the accessories of the morning "levée."

After the first half of the eighteenth century, fashions, furniture, and no doubt manners, tended to become more graceful, following the refinements of the French court. An increasing artificiality seems to have kept pace with this development, and pomades and powders, cosmetics and scents, rapidly became the order of the day. To the beau of the time, nature seemed to have blundered when she provided anything but snow-white locks. To remedy her errors, however, it was necessary for milord to keep his powder dry and protect his other aids to nature from dampness and deterioration.

The accompanying illustration shows how it was accomplished in this particular

¹Acc. No. 19.66. Height, 58 in.; width, 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.; depth, 16 in.

instance. A cover of curved glass is attached below the central mirror in such a fashion that unless held open it automatically falls back and seals the various wooden boxes of wig powder, etc., from the open air. This, of course, has obvious advantages over the more usual tin-lined compartment which might be carelessly left open. The use of a curved pane of glass is in itself unusual, but this particular use of a glass cover seems to have been peculiar to the makers, Seddon Sons and Shackleton, as it occurs also in the famous dressing cabinet made by them in 1793 for Charles IV of Spain, after designs by Sir William Chambers, R. A.

Although lacking the painted panels by Sir William Hamilton, R. A., which adorned the latter, the piece acquired by the Museum is a very excellent example of the refined and thorough craftsmanship of the day. In design, its lines are typical of the delicate severity of the earlier Sheraton style, in which the influence of the Hepplewhite fashion is still clearly felt. The character of the piece, while extremely delicate, is quite distinctly masculine in comparison with other similar pieces of the period.

In decoration it is particularly interesting, as it relies entirely on arrangement of panels and bands of mahogany, satinwood, and box veneers to produce the richness of effect desired, aided only on the flanking cabinets by narrow painted bands of flowers. The scheme consists in general of a central panel of ripple mahogany surrounded by a broad band of box, which is in turn enveloped by a band of satinwood. The box and satinwood are separated by a quarter inch strip of mahogany, and the whole enclosed by a narrow band of ebony and box arranged in a very unusual herring-bone pattern. In every case the bands and panels are separated by linings of ebony and box, which give to the design a vivacity and clarity otherwise unattainable. A study of these veneers will leave no doubt of the quality of design and workmanship, which is carried throughout even into the mahogany carcass.

Before going further it should also be

noted that the piece bears the name-plate¹ of the makers, prominently placed at the back of the powder compartment. This is seldom met with in the furniture of the time, and its occurrence generally denotes a piece of unusual quality or importance, which was probably regarded by the producers as a masterpiece. Judging by this, Seddon Sons & Shackleton were justly considered among the first cabinet-makers of the time. They and their peers were probably more influential in developing the so-called Sheraton style than Thomas Sheraton himself, whose activity as an actual creator of furniture is quite doubtful. A student of Sheraton's "Drawing Book" will easily recognize the quality of "paper design" permeating the entire work. This may detract little from the value of the book as an historical document, but considerably lowers its value to the modern craftsman, who is largely unfamiliar with the graphic conventions of the eighteenth century.

To the craftsman at least, an actual piece of the quality of this dressing table speaks with the greatest possible force. Its style is particularly adaptable to modern commercial methods of production, which is not the case with most of the furniture of the mid-eighteenth century, where the fine quality of hand-carved ornament played a part of such importance. Careful consideration and study by the modern designers, and judicious selection of veneers will, however, go a long way toward reproducing, at this time, some of the charm of these late eighteenth-century examples.

M. R. R.

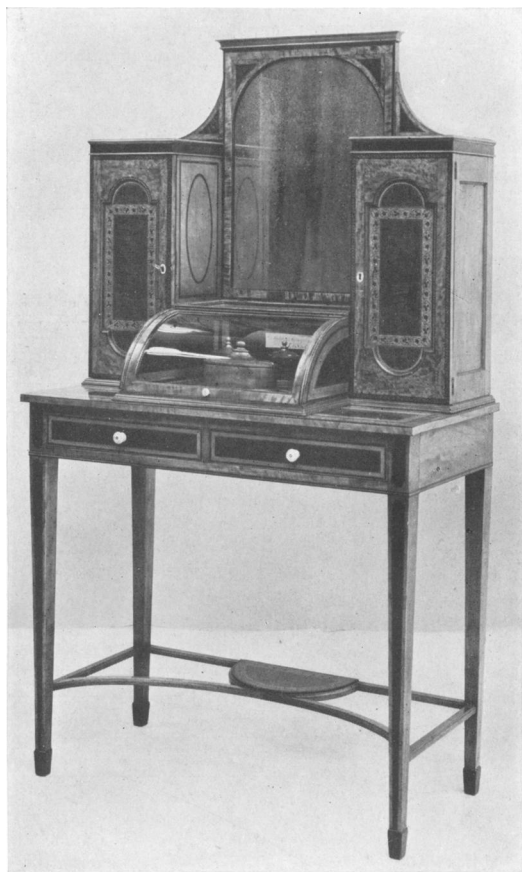
AN EARLY PERSIAN MINIATURE. Among the recent acquisitions of the Museum is a rare and interesting example of Persian miniature painting of the late Mongol period, dating from about A. D. 1340. The leaf, containing five small miniatures, three on one side and two on the other, is one of six similar leaves which, with two full-page miniatures, formed the illustrations of an anthology of Persian poetry, Mounis-Al-Ahrar Fi Dagaig El Ashaar

¹Engraved and painted on an ivory plaque: Seddon Sons & Shackleton, London.

(The Friends of the Liberal Minded in the Form of Fine Poems), compiled and written by a well-known poet of the time, Muhammed-ibn-Badr al-Djadjarmi, of Djadjarm, a city of Khurasan.

The manuscript was finished in the month of Ramazan A. H. 741 (A. D. 1340),

bands separated by a few lines of Naskhi characters. The background of each panel is a deep vermilion on which the figures are drawn with great delicacy and precision. The subjects represented are the signs of the zodiac in their human or animal form, a motif of which the painters of the period



DRESSING TABLE, ENGLISH, ABOUT 1790-95

as stated by a quatrain on the last leaf. The special literary interest of the book lies in the fact that it contains thirteen rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. The earliest manuscript of these poems previously known dates from not earlier than A. H. 800 (A. D. 1400) or about sixty years later than the present manuscript, which is therefore the oldest copy known to exist.

The miniatures are painted in horizontal

seem to have been very fond. An interesting comparison can be made with the outline illustrations of similar subjects belonging to a work on astronomy of a somewhat earlier date, already acquired by the Museum and shown in Gallery E14.

The similarity in drawing and design which exists between these miniatures and the figure decoration on Rhages pottery of the same period has led to the belief that

the former were a product of a Rhages school, if that term may be used. It seems doubtful, however, that the similarity is anything more than what might be expected to exist between works of art executed at approximately the same time and under similar conditions and traditions.

haps less evident in the delineation of the animals and the design of the vegetation, which are very similar in manner to those found in the manuscripts of the earlier years of the century. The strength of the coloration also has little in common with the neutralized tones of the true Mongolian



PERSIAN MINIATURE, ABOUT 1340

The drawing shows in a very interesting manner the change in style that took place after the disappearance of the strong Chinese influence which dominated the first part of the century. While retaining somewhat of the stiffness of the earlier style, the human figures have a great deal of the quality in line and drawing of the succeeding Timurid school. This is per-

type, displaying, on the other hand, more of the richness characteristic of the later school. Furthermore, the vital quality of the entire design suggests the energy of a new influence and idea rather than the latest efforts of the old, though in point of date it belongs without doubt to the end of the Mongol period.

M. R. R.